

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BAGHDA 00349 181942Z
ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 NSC-05 SP-02
SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 /070 W
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R 180929Z FEB 78
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5696
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MOGADCISIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0349

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, MASS, IZ
SUBJECT: SOVIET OVERFLIGHTS

1. SOMALI AMBASSADOR ABUBAKAR REPORTS THAT RELATIONS
WITH IRAQ ARE IN HIS VIEW EXCELLENT. THERE ARE NO
PROBLEMS OF WHICH HE IS AWARE, AND SUPPORT FOR SOMALIA
CONTINUES TO BE BROAD AND UNQUESTIONED.

2. ASKED HOW THE USE OF IRAQI AIRSPACE AND FACILITIES
FOR THE MOVEMENT OF SOVIET MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO
ETHIOPIA SQUARED WITH THIS ANALYSIS, ABUBAKAR REPLIED
THAT HE HAD HEARD THAT RUMOR MANY TIMES FROM MANY
SOURCES. HE HAD ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS RAISED THE
MATTER WITH THE GOI AND HAD BEEN CATEGORICALLY
ASSURED THERE WAS NO TRUTH IN THE STORY. THE IRAQIS
HAD POINTED OUT THAT SUCH A THING WAS OBVIOUSLY
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PAGE 02 BAGHDA 00349 181942Z

IMPOSSIBLE IN VIEW OF THE PUBLIC COMMITMENTS TO THE
ERITREANS AND SOMALIS. ABUBAKAR HAD TO ADMIT THAT
WAS A PRETTY CONVINCING ARGUMENT.

3. FROM HERE, THE SOVIET OVERFLIGHTS POSE TWO RATHER
PERPLEXING PROBLEMS. THE FIRST IS THE DIFFICULTY OF
DETERMINING JUST EXACTLY WHAT LEVERAGE HAS BEEN USED

BY THE USSR TO ELEVATE IRAQ TO SUCH A HIGH LEVEL OF CYNICISM. THE MOST OBVIOUS EXPLANATIONS ARE ALSO THE MOST LIKELY (AVAILABILITY OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT, NEED TO MAINTAIN CLOSE RELATIONS WITH SOMEONE OTHER THAN PDRY, DESIRE TO RETAIN EDGE OVER SYRIA IN SOVIET EYES, ETC), BUT THEY TEND TO OVERLOOK THE SHARP CONFLICT WITH BASIC IRAQI BAATH POLICIES THAT IS BEING GENERATED.

4. THE SECOND PROBLEM IS RELATED TO AND PERHAPS AN OUTGROWTH OF THE FIRST: THE RATHER DREAM-LIKE ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH THE OVERFLIGHTS HAVE TAKEN PLACE. NO ONE IN BAGHDAD SEEM TO KNOW OF THEIR EXISTENCE, OR IS WILLING TO ADMIT IT. CONSEQUENTLY THERE IS DIFFICULTY IN ACCEPTING THE FACTS AS REPORTED FROM ABROAD WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ONE OF TWO WEST EUROPEAN AMBASSADORS, THE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY APPEARS UNAWARE THAT ANYTING BIZARRE IS GOING ON.
PECK

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NNN

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